

10/659,423 filed 09/10/2003

Tammy Burd-Mehta

Reply to Office Action of December 05, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-10 are pending in the above-captioned application, and all of these claims stand rejected.

I. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stapleton (US 5,188,963) in view of Moreira ("Efficient removal of PCR inhibitors using agarose-embedded DNA preparations")

Claims 1, 3-7, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Stapleton (US 5,188,963) in view of Moreira ("Efficient removal of PCR inhibitors using agarose-embedded DNA preparations," Nucleic Acids Research. 1998. Vol. 26, No. 13: Pages 3309-3310). This rejection is respectfully traversed. To warrant rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. See MPEP § 2142.

With regard to amended claim 1, at a minimum, the combination of Stapleton and Moreira does not teach a PCR sieving medium comprising a polymer solution, "which polymer solution comprises less than about 0.4% polymer." While both Stapleton and Moreira teach performing PCR in a gel, only Stapleton teaches performing PCR and electrophoresis in the same gel. Stapleton does not specify a polymer concentration. The Examiner has cited Moreira for Applicant's limitation of the sieving medium comprising "less than about 0.4% polymer."

In fact, the sieving medium of Moreira is a 1.2% agarose gel as stated on page 3310, at the end of the second full paragraph. The agarose blocks of Moreira containing agarose concentrations "even as high as 0.3%" are used in sample preparation to isolate large DNA's from cell debris and contaminants, resulting in a purified gDNA. See page 3309, the paragraph beginning at the bottom of column 1. These gel blocks are then cut with a surgical blade into 5- μ l fragments and added to a PCR mixture. Following thermocycling, the products are "electrophoresed on 1.2% agarose gels." See page 3310, the second full paragraph. As a result, Moreira teaches away from performing both PCR and electrophoresis in a PCR sieving medium having "less than about 0.4% polymer."

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Thus, combining the two cited references does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stapleton (US 5,188,963) in view of Moreira ("Efficient removal of PCR inhibitors using agarose-embedded DNA preparations") is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-7 and 10 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious. See MPEP § 2143.03 and *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Therefore, dependent claims 3-7 and 10 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejections of these claims as being unpatentable over Stapleton in view of Moreira is also respectfully requested.

II. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stapleton (US 5,188,963) in view of Moreira ("Efficient removal of PCR inhibitors ...") and further in view of Woolley et al. ("Ultra-high-speed DNA fragment separations using microfabricated capillary array electrophoresis chips")

Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Stapleton (US 5,188,963) in view of Moreira ("Efficient removal of PCR inhibitors using agarose-embedded DNA preparations") and further in view of Woolley et al. ("Ultra-high-speed DNA fragment separations using microfabricated capillary array electrophoresis chips," Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. November 1994. Vol. 91: Pages 11348-11352). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, Applicants' claim 1 is nonobvious. Claims 8 and 9 depend directly and indirectly, respectively, from claim 1. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 8 and 9 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stapleton in view of Moreira and further in view of Woolley et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann C. Petersen
Reg. No. 55,536

CALIPER LIFE SCIENCES, INC.
605 Fairchild Drive
Mountain View, CA 94043
Direct: 650-623-0667
Fax: 650-623-0504
ann.petersen@caliperLS.com

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Signed: 